Newsletter of the Eagle Point Historical Society & Museum

March 1995

$1.50

Eagle Point around 1912
From the hill looking north. See page 11 for description of buildings.

Editor,
Barbara Hegne

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A History Making Day In Eagle Point

The wild west will live again Saturday May 20th at the Eagle Point Museum. History will be represented from every area in Jackson County. All the museums are invited to participate. They will bring items to display from their collection and items from their gift shops. Join us for, history, entertainment, displays, demonstrations and family fun . The event begins at 10 a.m. and ends at 5 p.m.

Entertainment & Demonstrations

Don't miss **Kevin Hagen of *Little House On The Prairie*** who will entertain and sing. Our own **Little Butte Mountain Men** will demonstrate the way of the west with their old fashioned muzzle-loaders. The **Household Cuties** will perform laughable skits. The **Old Time Fiddlers** will keep you toe tapping. The children can gather around **storyteller, Jay Rosenberg,** while he spins a captivating tale. **Ernie Redington's** Antique Guns will be on display. Enjoy FREE popcorn and a chance to win a membership to a local museum.

Museums, societies & historical groups participating include:
Gold Hill, Applegate, Shady Cove, Phoenix, Talent, Southern Oregon & Jacksonville Children's Museum, Camp White, Crater Rock Museum, Lake Creek, Woodville, Prospect, Southern Oregon Button Club, Pacific northwest Museum of Natural History and others.

KEVIN wore many hats, he worked for the U.S. Government in Wiesbaden, Germany, attended UCLA Law School, taught ballroom dancing, undertook several executive training programs in stocks and bonds, banking, insurance, and retailing. He also served in the U.S. Navy. At the age of 30, he auditioned for a play at a community theater...and knew immediately that acting would do him for a lifetime.

KEVIN starred in hundreds of television shows, from the golden days of STUDIO ONE, through the cowhide years of GUNSMOKE and BONANZA, with stops in THE UNTOUCHABLES, TWILIGHT ZONE, and MASH, several movies including SHENANDOAH, a western classic, and finally to practicing medicine on the prairie.

KEVIN starred as 'DOC BAKER' on LITTLE HOUSE ON THE PRAIRIE for all nine years of its popular television run.

The Fastest Horse Race in Oregon's History.

(C) by Barbara Hegne

The race was 90 miles as the crow flys, and the entire country was waiting for the words the faster rider would bring.The words that Captain Jack, the Modoc Indian Chief, was hanged.

It was October 1873 and on the back of the fastest horse sat Ki Mathews, a 23 year old Eagle Point cowboy. As the world waited and watched, so did Ki, waiting for the sound of a wooden plank falling, watching for the signal of a handkerchief...just waiting.

Hezekiah Mathews, Ki for short, was born in Missouri in 1850. His family settled on Little Butte Creek in 1853. The Mathews became known as one of the best stockraisers in the country. Ki, and his two brothers, Dudley and William were trained to be expert horseman, but Ki had the natural ability without the lessons.

Ki was a strong, handsome, rawboned kid. He had unusually intense milk-blue eyes that gave out a warning to anyone who tried to get too close. He came from a high-spirited adventurous family and even as a lad, he was imbued with the same spirit. He was daring, courageous, and outspoken. And because of his love and mastery of horses, he could break the unconquerable and ride him like the wind.

Ki was a volunteer in the battle against the Modoc Indians. That fight culminated at the lava beds near Tule Lake, California with the capture of the Indian Chief. The captured leader, Captain Jack, was taken to Fort Klamath to be hanged. All the world was waiting for news of this historic event. Three newspaper interests, two in San Francisco, and one in Chicago, offered to pay a rider $100 to pony express their news dispatches. In addition, they offered a bonus to the first rider to reach Jacksonville, some 90 miles away.

The top beam of the gallow cast an erie shadow on the faces of the four military soldiers standing single file on the platform. In front of them, underneath the twisted hanging ropes, stood four Modoc Indians. Hundreds of on-lookers from all over the country pressed forward in an attempt to get a better view of this long awaited event.The crowd had been gathering for five days and now in the cool October sun history was about to be made.

The Indians were the renegade Modocs; Black Jim, Boston Charley, John Schonchin, and their famous leader, Captain Jack. The Modoc tribe was responsible for plundering the emigrant wagon trains migrating through northern California and Southern Oregon, and for raids and massacres on local settlers. To curtail their escapades, the government ordered the Modocs to a reservation. Captain Jack, (so named by a white man) didn't fare well under the restraint of the white man, and he soon escaped from the reservation.

Kientpoos "Captain Jack" Modoc Chief

Captain Jack, and his warriers, signed their own death warrent, when during negotiations with General Canby, Captain Jack Killed Canby and Boston Charley killed Dr. Rev. Thomas. Other commussioners, military and Indians were shot and wounded in this outbreak. The Indians retreated into a natural stronghold in the lava beds near Tule Lake on the Oregon-California border. Oregon

Captain Jack's Cave in the Lava Beds

(Continued from page 3)

The Fastest Horse Race

troops were sent to flush out the Modocs, but little was known about the terrain and layout of the stronghold.

The stronghold was a creation of hardened volcanic lava cliffs, caves, gullies and craggy rock formations that stretched out in every direction. While the Indians were holed up in this natural impenetrable rock they could not be seen by the military, but the military presented full-view targets for the Indians. However, the Indians were sealed in with no way out. They soon ran out of water and food and ammunition became scarce.

The tribe quarreled and fought among themselves. Some escaped the lava beds and gave up. With Jack's band scattered to the four winds and the troops within sight, no one could get supplies to the starving Indians. As Jack saw his beaten tribe surrender one by one, he knew the battle was over and he gave up his gun.. Jack and his sub chiefs were taken to Fort Klamath to wait execution.

Ki Mathews (right) and his brother Dudley Polk (left).

The Rancheria Trail

The four men waited at the edge of the crowd for their dispatches, Ki and his horse, Black Beauty were ready. The horse was known as the swiftest in the country. Two ladies blushed as they glanced at Ki from underneath their bonnets. Ki had the look and attitude women liked. His face was tanned and his thick moustache spread to the corners of his mouth and covered both lips. As he tipped his hat toward the giggling lasses, their parents quickly pulled them aside. Folks didn't want their daughters around this wild kid named Ki.

Black Beauty was wild and unrestrained, but Ki tamed her to a degree of respect they both understood without taking away her fire. Black Beauty pawed at the dirt, snorted and pulled against the reins. She was excited and

As the riders were handed their dispatches, they dug their heels into their horse's flanks and began the race of a lifetime. When Ki turned off to enter the Rancheria Trail, the woods closed in around him. The thick brush grabbed at Beauty's belly and the tree branches jutted out near Ki's face. Riding up a steep ravine, Ki unexpectedly came upon a camp of Indians. The Indians aimed their rifles and started shooting. Ki fired back then lowered himself in his saddle and touched the quirt to Beauty. Man and animal became one shadow as they galloped over the ridge to safety.

Black Beauty was wild and unrestrained, but Ki tamed her to a degree of respect they both understood without taking away her fire.

At three separate points, Ki's two brothers, William and Dudley Polk, and his father, John were to wait with fast fiery relay horses to make exchanges. The first exchange was to be at Four Mile Lake, the second at Rancheria and the third at Brownsboro. The brothers were at their designated spots, and Ki quickly exchanged each tired horse for a fresh one and galloped off without losing a minute. All went well until Ki reached Brownsboro where his father was supposed to be. Ki sounded his six-shooter as the signal, but no response came. He was in a delemma. With his horse tired and no time to lose, he rode to a farmer's house, borrowed a horse, and quickly got back on the trail. Within a few miles, Ki could tell the borrowed horse was a Sunday nag and was losing energy fast. Ki was just about to give up when he saw his father riding hell-bent pulling a fine racing mare.

Once on the mare's back, Ki could sense the power in her and he knew he was back in the race. He plunged through the cold water of Little Butte

The Rancheria Trail went near the base of Mount Pitt to Fort Klamath.

and across the Agate desert to the stage road. As the mining town of Jacksonville came into sight, Ki spurred his lathered horse. The animal stretched its long neck and burned its last shot of energy as it leaped ahead and clambered toward the dim lights. The horse still had plenty of steam although the long ride had worn its hoofs bare. It was exactly six hours and 45 minutes when Ki raced down the dusty street lined with people waving, clapping and trying to touch him. He sat high in the saddle and yelled until his voice was strained. "Captain Jack was hanged, Captain Jack was hanged."

That evening with his earning and the $100 first rider bonus tucked deep inside his boot, Ki celebrated with the entire town. His name was on everyone's lips. Ki smiled to himself to think both he, and the great Indian chief, made history that day. □

End Notes:

Murray, Keith, A., The Modocs and Their War, 1959.
Riddle, Jeff, The Indian History of the Modoc War, 1914.
Lawrence, Mark E., Pony Telegraph, Table Rock Sentinel, June 1981.
O'Harra, Margorie, Medford Mail Tribune, April 6, 1966.
Stone, Buena Cobb, Fort Klamath, 1964.
Democratic Times Oct. 4, 11, 1873
Drannan Capt.Wm. F., Thirty One Years on the Plains and in the Mountains, 1902
Hegne, Barbara,Unforgettable Pioneers, 1987

Fort Klamath where Captain Jack was hanged.

Right: Company of Warm Spring Indian scouts who fought against Captain Jack

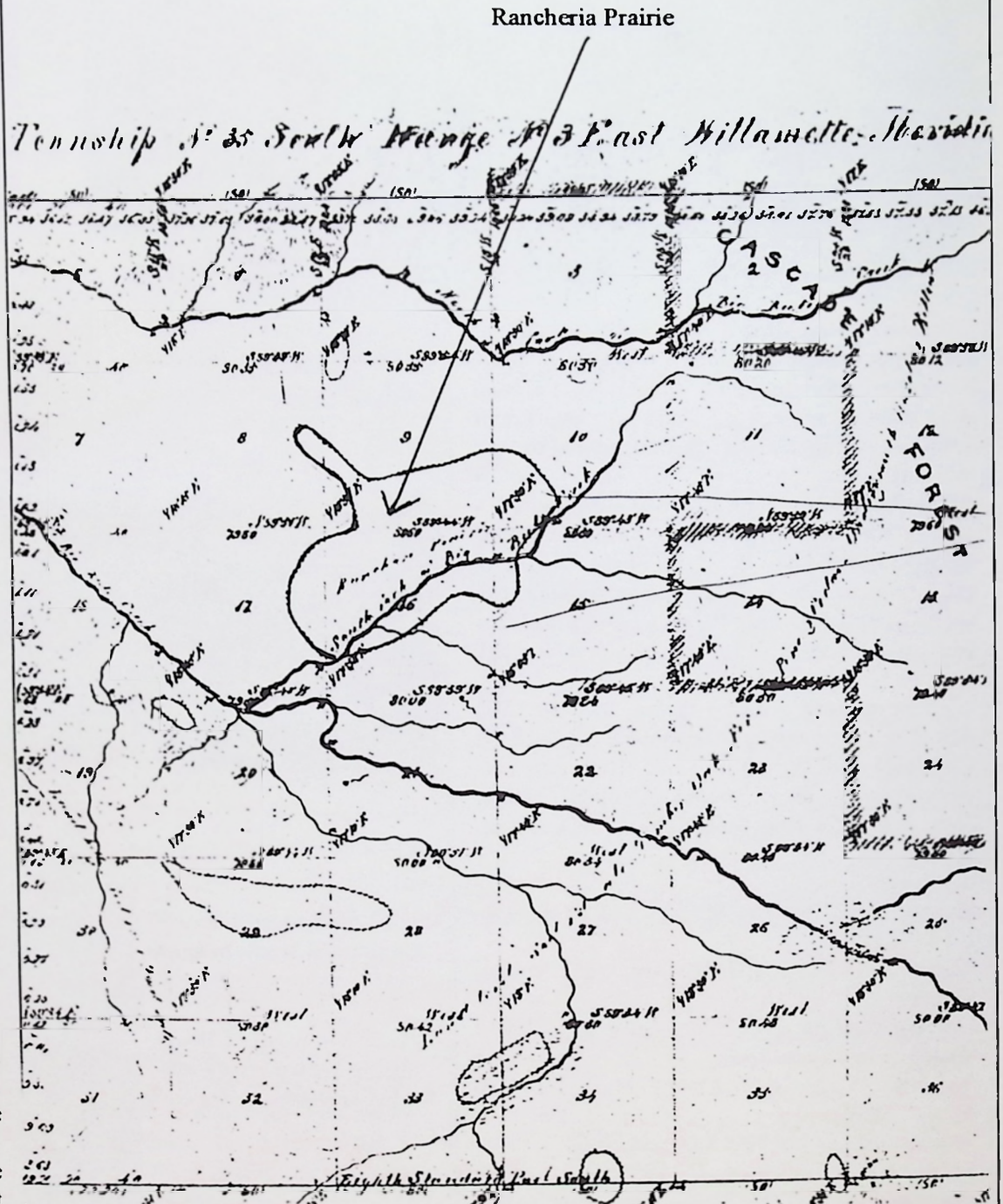
The Old Indian & Military Trail to Fort Klamath

By Barbara Hegne

The Indians had many trails along Butte Creek and its tributaries. They had a rancheria camp above present day Butte Falls on the south fork of Big Butte Creek (Twp 35 SR 3 E Sec. 16 and parts of sec 15, 10, 9, 8, 17.) The trail from the valley led east over the mountain (Obenchain) to Little Butte Creek across Rancheria Prairie to Fort Klamath. This is the same trail Ki Mathews rode. In 1863 a wagon road was established using parts of the old Indian trail through Rancheria Prairie. The report (from present day Butte Falls) reads: "...thence North East crossing Big Butte (just below present day Bud Nutting Park bridge) to the top of the bluff on the north side of said creek 1 mile, thence east to Rancheria Prairie 5 miles, thence south east through said prairie, crossing Rancherie Creek, about 250 yards west of the old ford on said creek, thence to the foot of the mountains on the old trail from this valley to the Klamath Lake, 1 1/4, passing 150 yards west of where James Crow and Jon. Conger is buried." These two men were in a party of four camped at Rancheria Prairie in April 1859. They were found massacred and thought to have been killed by the Indians. They were buried on the prairie.

The military used the trail about a year and found it most unsatisfactory. It was steep, rugged and hard on the animals. The next year Captain Sprague, with the help of John Mathews, (Ki's father) found a better trail to Fort Klamath. The new trail followed the Rogue River to Annie Creek to Fort Klamath. The road was found to be 15 to 20 miles closer than the old trail and "Not 500 yards of rocky road or more than 700 yard of grading in the whole distance between the Rogue River and Ft. Klamath. I think teams can make the trip on the new route from 2 to 3 days sooner than by the old one." This route was established in 1864 and the old trail was left to the Indians. □

Survey map of Rancheria Prairie contracted April 13, 1855 completed July 7, 1856



More wonderful Donations

When people come into the museum and see local family treasures on display, they get excited and want to have their own families recognized. Many wonderful items have been added to our collection allowing us to have a variety of catagories of interest to people of all ages and all walks of life. Our displays include: School, Kitchen, military, gems & minerals, childrens, clothing, fruit jars & glassware, irons, eye glasses, pipe & tobacco, cosmetic, pottery, photos & camera, pens & writing, lace, records & Edison phonograph, mining, agriculture, tools, Indian & Chinese artifacts, baskets, fans, saddles, milk cans and much much more.

New donations: Silverware, authentic Chinese Wah Chung family tin & tray, Sharon Barker; Railroad Spittoon, Japanese wedding doll display & mouth harp, Walt Barker; rocking chair Helen Kenyon; Rogue Valley Cowboys vest & harp, Chuck Sturgill; Rogue Valley Cowboys vest, violin & trophy of Ed Cowden's donated by Gladys Ragsdale; Indian Head Penny (found at Brownsboro) & buggy whip, Lee Stephan & Tom Scott; 1873 Otis Smith Pearl-handled 32 Cal. Rim Fire gun, Ernie Redington; the old Jeff & Annie Conover Home Comfort stove, Gary & Glenda Kaiser; Wedding dishes, silverware, Christmas ornaments, Sammy Coy baby dresses & more, Dorothy (Coy) McDougall; Mink fur shawl & muff (2 sets), Midge Harnish; thunder eggs Priday Ranch, Dorothy Martin; Various tools, Milt Gorden, benches, Central Point Grange.

New Purchases

New purchases include: Video camera for interviews, VCR, Nikon Camera, Photograph copy board, magnetic photo easel, paper cutter, photo albums, standing photo display, UV hand-held light to view flourscent rocks and various office supplies.

Making life easier around the museum. Garbage service began in January. Harry Kellert will do a through cleaning of the museum twice a month and Dempsey's will take care of the landscaping and yards.

Wayne Carter has been donating his time on Tuesdays to help with sorting, cataloging, cleaning artifacts and other museum chores. We all appreciate his efforts.

Saturday volunteer staff:
Helen Wolgamott, Ernie Redington, Sharon Barker, Virginia Cutler, Nicolina Sherlock, Mazie Neece, Arlene Hoffman, Beryl Hickson, and Inita Kaiser.
Other volunteers: Walt Barker, Midge Harnish, Wayne Carter, and Rose Cobun. Carole Reynolds has been substituting for Amy Dawson as secretary.

Thanks to all.

People Profile Don Reynolds

Don Reynolds in his 49er cap spreading the good news about the Eagle Point Museum.

Don was a real Labor Day baby born on that holiday way way back in 1937. Don was born in Ashland and attended Talent school where he graduated in 1955. Don works for Timber Products as a 'Spreadman'. He is also Superintendent of the Antelope Sunday School. Don and his wife Carol have three children and nine grandchildren.

Don has always been fascinated with history especially local history. He told Carol he was going to get involved in the Eagle Point Historical Society. Little did he dream in just a short time he would be "really involved." In August 1993, he was elected Vice-President of the organization. He is also on the Antelope Cemetery Committee.

Wish List

There are always items needed by the museum to complete a collection. We are wishing for the following items: Old cork boots (for logging display); any Chinese artifacts especially opium tins and Chinese medicine bottles; Post Cards with early local postmarks, Brownsboro, Etna (Shady Cove), Leeds, Dudley, Butte Falls, Prospect, etc. We need for our Postal Display. If you have any of the 'wish' items call the museum and leave your number 826-4166.

Southern Oregon Historical Hosts Bus Tours

Four local valley tours are scheduled: Mar. 11, Rogue Valley Creamery & Woodville & Gold Hill Museums.

Mar. 25, Phoenix, Ashland's lithia Park, Talent Historical Society.

April 8, Walking tour of Jacksonville and Medford Orchards.

April 22,, Eagle Point Museum, Butte Creek Mill and Big Butte Historical Society.

For more details and information, Call Margorie Edens, Oral Historian,for Southern Oregon Historical Society (503) 773-6536

Eagle Point Museum is open every Sat. 10am to 4pm & Tues. 9am to Noon. We will open any day any time with prior arrangements. We want you to see our museum. Call Barbara to schedule, 826-9725 □

Baptish Church & George W. Daley's New York Cash Store, both built in 1906, located on South Royal. The white building at left edge of picture is the school built in October 1899.

The New York Store was also used for local dances with the Daley Band. Posters in the museum's collection describe the various dances; "Calico & Overall Party", "Masquerade Ball", "May Day Ball" ("..a competent hostler will be in attendance at the Sunnyside Stables.") They had basket suppers and the floor managers were Chas.Cingcade, John Smith & Roy Ashpole.)

Later the building was used for various activities including: a skating rink, dance hall, restaurant and private residence.

New Book: "*Settling The Rogue Valley, The Tough Times, The Forgotten People* by Barbara Hegne.

This book is not about the politicians, bankers, merchants and photographers who have already had their glory in publications. Rather, it is about the unknown miner, mother, grandmother, whiskey smuggler, crook, prostitute, and neglected child who also contributed to the development of the Rogue Valley. It uncovers the prejudice, the hard times, and the struggles of the lesser known, but equally important people. Perfect bound, 110 pages, $13. On sale at the Eagle Point Museum, Southern Oregon History Store, Eagle Thrift and other stores in the county. Author will sign books at the History Making Day in Eagle Point.

"Reel" Bear Of A Tale

By Carole Nielson

Long before "Bigfoot" came "Reelfoot," a monstrous 19th-century grizzly bear who devoured livestock and frightened settlers along the Oregon-California border for more than two decades.

Back in the 1870s and '80s the mere mention of the name "Reelfoot" in the settlements and mining camps of southern Oregon and northern California could raise the hair on a brave man's neck and cause a frontier mother to herd her children inside their log cabin and drop the bar across the door. Reelfoot was a monstrous grizzly that roamed the rugged Siskiyou Mountains along the Oregon-California border for more than 20 years. He was the scourge of stockmen, farmers and settlers, leaving behind him the scattered remains of hundreds of head of livestock as he roamed freely across Klamath, Jackson and Siskiyou counties.

Reelfoot's name came from his peculiar tracks. While still young, he was caught in a trap set by Bruce Grieve when he returned to feast a second time on the homesteader's 2-year-old heifer he had killed. The bear managed to free himself, but he lost three toes on his left front paw in the process. From that time forward his huge tracks were unmistakable. Learning from that painful experience, he avoided traps for the rest of his life and would never again return to a kill for a season meal. The clever old bruin even figured out how to steal bait from traps without getting caught. Trappers would hang a piece of meat in a tree and set a trap below it. Most bears would step in the trap while trying to grab the bait, but not Reelfoot. He would circle the tree, approaching from the opposite side of the trap, stand on his hind legs, reach around the trunk and pull the bait to him.

The big grizzly's method of killing was distinctive. Rushing his prey from a higher vantage point, Reelfoot could easily bring down a full-grown steer or horse, crushing its spine just behind the shoulders with his massive jaws and enormous teeth.

As Reelfoot's reputation grew, cattlemen became increasingly anxious to rid the countryside of this voracious predator. Major Baron, owner of a spread in the Pilot Rock country, posted a $500 reward and nailed the notice to a pine tree in the area. It read, "Reward of $500 will be paid by me to the man who can prove he killed Old Reelfoot—Major Baron, Ashland, Ore." Soon other stockmen were adding their notices to the tree, and eventually the total pledged for Reelfoot's demise grew to $1,700 (some accounts say $2,700), a very respectable sum in those days. The cash reward inspired many a hunter to take to the old grizzly's trail, leading to some hair-raising experiences and enough tall tales to be told around fire-sides for years to come.

One time, a large number of sheep were slaughtered by the old bear near Pilot Rock—apparently for sport, since none of them had been eaten. A hunting party was formed, and it included the best hounds that could be found. The men and hounds followed the tracks from Pilot Rock north into Oregon, across the upper end of the Rogue River valley, through what is known as the Dead Indian country, and on along the shores of Lake of the Woods. Although they tracked him for well over 100 miles, the hunters never once spotted the elusive grizzly. They continued the chase all the way to the rim of Crater Lake. Overcome by discouragement and running low on supplies, the bone-weary men and sore-footed dogs then turned back. That night while the hunters slept, Reelfoot killed a steer within a mile of their camp. They came across the partly eaten carcass next morning. The footprints around it were unmistakably those of the wily silvertip, but they disappeared into the densely forested mountains.

On a spring day in 1882, J.D. Williams, a sheepherder, came across the fresh tracks of a huge bear, In an instant he knew they belonged to Reelfoot. He had left his gun in camp, so he quickly scrambled to the top of a tree. From his perch he could see a small herd of cattle, including a large bull, grazing in a meadow about 50 yards away. Williams could also make out the dark form of a gigantic grizzly lurking in the timber at the edge of the meadow. Suddenly the bear burst from his hiding place, running at full speed toward a calf that was grazing beside its mother. The cow attempted to defend her young, but one forceful swipe from the grizzly's paw left her crumpled and bleeding. With a loud bellow, the bull lowered his head and charged the bear, knocking him into the brush. Angrily snapping his teeth, the snarling silvertip exploded into a fit of fury, ripping and tearing at his assailant with steely claws. The bull retaliated with slashing horns, ramming the bear with brute force. The two beasts collided in a blur of hide, fur, blood and saliva. Each animal pitted its tremendous strength against the other, vying for position and plowing up the soft, damp earth in the struggle. Finally, the grizzly seized the bull by the nose, gave a swift, powerful turn and broke the bovine's neck. The bull slumped to the ground in a grotesquely twisted heap. Triumphant, the bear inspected his kill, then ambled over to the nearby spring for a drink and a leisurely swim, after which he returned to the calf he had been after in the beginning, ate his fill and shuffled off. The terrified sheepherder stayed in the tree until nightfall.

A homesteader by the name of William A. Wright had a one-man outfit on Camp Creek in Siskiyou County, Calif., near the Oregon border. A seasoned frontiersman, Wright had had his share of close scrapes with grizzlies, so he was wise to their ways. He had tried unsuccessfully on several oc-

casions to trap Old Reelfoot and had even devised what he thought was a foolproof plan to kill the bear with a set gun. Reelfoot foiled that plan in much the same way he stole bait from traps. He got the meat and the gun went off, but instead of hitting the bear, the bullet lodged in a tree trunk.

On an April day in 1890, while Bill Wright was working on his corral fence, he watched helplessly as a huge grizzly rushed from the edge of the timber across his hay meadow toward his prize bull. The bull had only enough time to raise his head and snort before the immense bear felled him with one blow. The grizzly crushed the bull's backbone with his massive jaws and the struggle was over. Wright bolted for his cabin, grabbed his rifle from its buckhorn rack levered open the loading gate, and slammed home a cartridge. He threw a few more cartridges in his pocket for good measure. Cautiously he circled the meadow until he was within 100 yards of the dead bull. He stopped and listened. No bear. Silently he moved to within 25 yards. Still no bear. He stood still for a long time. When Wright was certain the grizzly had high-tailed it out of that neck of the woods, he searched for tracks. There in the soft mud was a huge left front paw print with three toes missing. No doubt about it—Old Reelfoots's brand. The crafty old grizzly had killed his best bull right under his nose, and as the anger boiled up inside him, Wright knew that he was going to get that bear or die trying.

Wright saddled his best horse and rode down the creek to the Bean homestead. There he asked if their boy, Purl, could join him in the hunt. Purl Bean was not quite 17, but he was an expert tracker, a crack shot, and had already proved himself to be an accomplished mountaineer.

Wright and Bean took off on the fast-cooling trail of the big grizzly. It led up Camp Creek, west into the wildest, roughest country the Siskiyous had to offer. Dusk overtook them on Soda Mountain, where they built a small fire, ate some jerky, and crawled into their bedrolls spread close to the coals. Up and saddled at first light, they quickly picked up the trail. They chewed on jerky while they fought their way around the mountain, through tangled brush, over boulders and up and down steep ravines. At times the trail was easy to follow, marked by torn-up rotten logs, where the bear had searched for insects, and easy-to-see tracks in mud or snow. At other times the men lost valuable time looking for "signs." Once they caught sight of the grizzly as he broke trail through a snow drift almost at the crest of the mountain. Eventually the trail doubled back toward the head of Camp Creek.

On the frosty morning of April 10, 1890, near the head of Camp Creek, just three miles east of Pilot rock on the Oregon-California border, the two trackers rode through a brushy, snow-choked draw to the edge of a clearing. The men pulled up short. Not more than 80 yards away stood Old Reelfoot! The hunters dismounted, tied their horses and eased forward on foot. Men and bear stood staring at each other.

The giant grizzly reared up on his hind legs, spread his enormous arms and came straight for them. Wright pressed a whiskered cheek against the stock of his rimfire Spencer, lined up the front bead with the bear's throat and fired the first shot. Bean dropped to one knee, and with his repeating Winchester, sent one .44 slug after another into the bear's chest. But grizzlies are tough to kill! The bullets seemed only to infuriate the bear. He charged forward, tearing up brush with his teeth, his huge paws sending snow and sticks flying. The distance between men and bear was being used up at a terrifying rate. Bean wondered aloud if they should make a run for it and climb a tree. Wright told him the only chance they had was to stand their ground and keep shooting, so that's what they did. At 30 yards, Reelfoot crumpled and fell, fighting the reddening snow. Then he lay still.

Courtesy Southern Oregon Historical Society #2487

Old Reelfoot weighed 1,892 pounds, was aproximately 8 feet from nose to tail, and his claws were 4-1/2 inches long. His height was estimated to be between 11 and 12 feet when he stood on his hind legs.
Old Reelfoot was mounted and placed on a wagon that paraded through Jacksonville and Ashland.

Wright warned the boy not to approach the bear until they were sure he was dead. As the astounded men watched. Reelfoot got to his feet and stood momentarily dazed, sniffing the air. He caught the men's scent and again made a rush toward them. Both fired point blank at the bear's head and throat. Just when it looked as if nothing could kill this monster, the huge grizzly dropped dead—a heart-stopping 20 feet from where the two men stood.

Wright and Bean counted 10 bullet holes in Old Reelfoot's hide. He weighed 1,892 pounds, was approximately 8 feet from nose to tail, and his claws were 4-1/2 inches long. His height was estimated to be between 11 and 12 feet when he stood on his hind legs. His width across the hips was 2 feet 4-1/2 inches, and the length of his head was 18 inches. The measurement of his head around the jaws in front of the ears was 42-1/2 inches, and his head was 10-1/2 inches wide between the ears.

Reelfoot was mounted and placed on a wagon that

was paraded through Jacksonville and Ashland, Ore., as well as Yreka, Calif—towns in the vicinity of his old haunts. Old Reelfoot's mounted carcass went on the road with Bill Wright and Purl Bean and drew large crowds all over the West. In 1893 Reelfoot was exhibited at the Columbian Exposition in Chicago. Eventually Purl Bean sold his interest in the mounted bear to Bill Wright for the sum of $300.

There are conflicting stories about Reelfoot's final destination. Some say he was purchased by the native sons of the Golden West to be displayed in the lobby of their headquarters in San Francisco, and that he was destroyed in the great San Francisco earthquake and fire. Other accounts say that soldiers returning from World War 1 reported seeing him in a museum in Europe. Contacts were made with many European museums, but so far Old Reelfoot has not been found.

All that remains of the monstrous grizzly that once terrified settlers along the Oregon-California border is one of the claws left in Bruce Grieve's trap. The claw in on display in a museum in Yreka, along with some old photographs of the mounted carcass. □

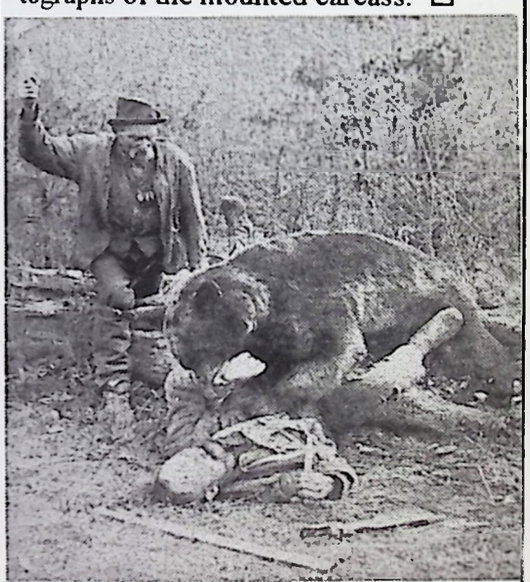
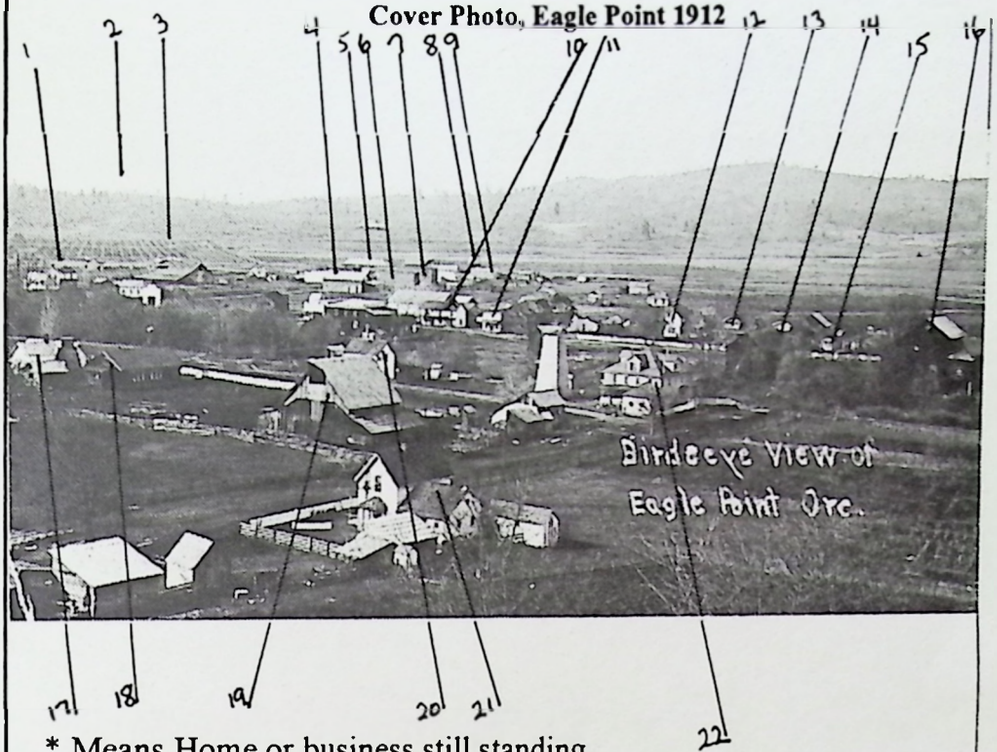


Photo from our file (C) 1893

Eagle Point Historical Society Member, Carole Nielson, writes articles for several national magazines. She lives in Shady Cove, Ore. and is a secretary of the Shady Cove School.
Her Reelfoot article appeared in Oct. 1993 issue of Wild West Magazine.

Cover Photo, Eagle Point 1912



* Means Home or business still standing.

1. Peter Simon's Pioneer Hotel (now Loto Apartments.)
2. Upper Table Rock
3 James Fryer's orchard (now Hwy 62 & area homes.)
4 Sam Harnish's Livery Stable (now Library & park)
5 Railroad Depot (area between intersection of Loto & Buchanan Sts. by Eagle Thrift Market.).
6. *Eagle Point State Bank (now candy & Expresso shop & apartments)
7 Von der Hellen Hardware (now ornamental Iron shop by hardware.)
8. Railroad Water Tank (end of Main street.)
9 Eagle Point Lumber (area home, end of Main on right)
10 (North Royal) Art Poole's Eagle Hotel (vacant lot.)
11. Post Office (across from our museum.)
12. Rader Home (burned, now apartment houses.)
13. *Shadrack Holmes built this house, 1911 (325 N. Royal.)
14. *Royal Brown House built 1911, (329 N Royal.)
15 First of the 'Brown' houses to be built around 1900
16 *Snowy Butte Mill, built in 1872 by John Daley (oldest building.).

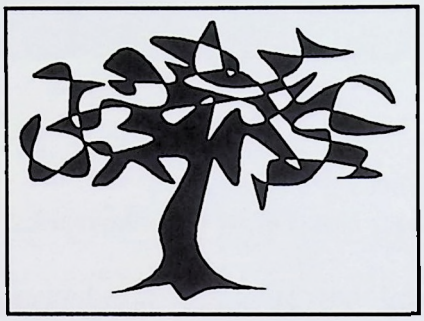
<u>Across Little Butte Creek:</u>

17 *Arens House 104 N. Shasta built C. 1885.
18 *Holmes House 114 N. Shasta.
19. Sunnyside barn & stables
20. *John Watkins built this house in 1894, 121 N.Shasta.
21 Sam Harnish Home
22 *Sunnyside Hotel, built around 1900 (private residence.)
(Note: the 'rock' house not shown is the second oldest building.

We are located in the historic district of Eagle Point, Oregon, between the old Antelope Covered bridge and the Butte Creek Mill on North Royal.

Membership in the Eagle Point Historical Society & Museum is only $7.50 per year due each July. New members *joining now* will receive three free months membership not being due until July 1996.

Members receive the Eagle Point Historical Newsletter and are voting members in the society. Send in your membership to:
Eagle Point Historical Society
P.O. Box 201
Eagle Point, Ore. 97524



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